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ABSTRACT

Two North Dakota home economists developed consumer education curricula based on adult performance level (APL) objectives and the perceived needs of their vocational students. They worked with local directors of adult basic and secondary education (ABSE) to incorporate the curricula into regular ABSE classes. Project objectives were to (1) identify consumer education needs of a sample group of adult basic education (ABE) students; (2) assist students in reaching the APL goal "to manage a family economy and demonstrate an awareness of sound purchasing principles" by formulating and testing teaching methods geared to the twenty APL objectives and student objectives; and (3) document effective methods for teaching consumer education to ABE students. The consumer education needs of students which surfaced most frequently included personal budgeting, using banking services, using consumer information resources, consumer protection and redress, and advertising psychology. This documentation was prepared to serve as a guide for home economics instructors. Ten self-study units developed as a result of the project included buying foods, buying clothing, buying automobiles, housing, budgeting, credit, insurance, consumer protection, home furnishings, and advertising. (The appendixes contain a sample learning packet and a sample lesson plan.) (LRA)

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FINAL REPORT

INCORPORATION OF CONSUMER EDUCATION
IN ADULT BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAMS
IN NORTH DAKOTA

Research Report No. 60

Submitted by:

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June, 1978

In cooperation with
NORTH DAKOTA STATE BOARD
FOR
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
BISMARCK, NORTH DAKOTA

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Incorporation of Consumer Education in Two Adult Basic Education Programs in North Dakota was a pilot project designed to give adult consumers essential basic skills in financial management and consumerism.

The project was a cooperative effort involving the State Board for Vocational Education, Jamestown Adult Basic and Secondary Education, and the Bismarck Adult Basic and Secondary Education Program.

Special appreciation is expressed for the guidance given by Ardis Young, State Supervisor of Vocational Home Economics and Dr. Donald Eshelby, RCU Coordinator for the State Board for Vocational Education, during the establishment and evaluation of the project.

Harriet Shurr, Jamestown ABSE Director and Waldemar Maas, Bismarck ABSE Director are acknowledged for their invaluable help in scheduling, recruiting students, providing moral support, evaluating curriculum and disbursing funds.

The core of all educational ventures is, of course, the teacher. Jan Wright, Jamestown and Wanda Heintzman, Bismarck are to be congratulated for their pioneering spirits, enthusiasm, professionalism, and warm affection for the adult learner. Their perceptive abilities have created valuable new learning opportunities for North Dakota citizens.

ABSTRACT

While consumer education is readily recognized as a basic adult need in contemporary society, few educational opportunities for gaining consumer skills are provided adults in North Dakota. The programs that do exist are geared to the already motivated, educated, and financially self-sufficient adult. One of Vocational Consumer Homemaking's primary functions is to provide consumer education to all ages and socio-economic groups. Home economics leadership saw the opportunity to reach an adult population that could benefit greatly by incorporating consumer learning experiences into the on-going Adult Basic and Secondary Education programs in the state. Results of the Texas Adult Performance Level study provided a theoretical framework for this successful cooperative effort.

Two home economists, one in Jamestown and one in Bismarck, developed curricula based on APL objectives and the perceived needs of their students. They worked with local directors of Adult Basic and Secondary Education to incorporate this curricula into regular ABSE classes. In this process they attempted to reach these project objectives:

1. Identify consumer education needs of a sample group of ABE students in North Dakota.
2. Assist students in reaching the APL goal "To Manage a Family Economy and Demonstrate an Awareness of Sound Purchasing Principles" by formulating and testing teaching methods geared to the 20 APL objectives and the students' own objectives.

3. Document effective methods for teaching consumer education to Adult Basic Education students; the document to be used as a guide for home economics instructors teaching this consumer component in all ABE programs in the state.

The Bismarck instructor used the traditional classroom group-work approach to the topic, while the Jamestown teacher individualized instruction by compiling information packets and exercise materials around each concept.

Students involved in the group-work format were highly motivated and consistent in their attendance. Those working with individualized lessons needed a thorough introduction to the packets, and those to work on them after their GED requirements were fulfilled.

The most significant results/findings are:

1. There must be a high level of motivation toward learning by the student to retain their involvement.
2. The student needs to be experiencing aspects of the learning in her/his real life situations for most affect.
3. Many ABSE students will continue to attend classes after receiving their GED, to study consumer education.
4. Certificates of achievement awarded to students on completion of a concept were motivators to further study.
5. Values clarification must be an integral part of the learning, but approached in an on-going manner, after relationships are well established in the class or between student and teacher.

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

According to a four-year investigation of adult functional competency, sponsored by HEW's Office of Education, one out of five American adults lacks the skills and knowledge needed to function effectively in today's society. One of the areas of incompetence identified was that of Consumer Economics. Twenty specific consumer objectives adults need to reach are listed in the study, under the major goal "To Manage a Family Economy and to Demonstrate an Awareness of Sound Purchasing Principles".

Consumer education has historically been a major function of Vocational Home Economics. Further emphasis was mandated by the federally legislated Education Amendments of 1976, with educational opportunities to include low income or disadvantaged adults. Home economics leadership began seeking a delivery system for providing consumer education to this target audience. Because Adult Basic Education in North Dakota comprises a consistent, on-going adult education structure, and because ABE students are often struggling to cope with inadequate incomes, two ABE programs (Jamestown and Bismarck) were chosen to incorporate, in their present program, a consumer component, taught by a qualified home economics instructor.

The following objectives were identified as goals of the project:

1. Identify consumer education needs of a sample group of ABE students in North Dakota.
2. Assist students in reaching the APL goal "To Manage a Family Economy and Demonstrate an Awareness of Sound Purchasing Principles" by formulating and testing teaching methods geared to the 20 API objectives and the students' own objectives.

3. Document effective methods for teaching consumer education to Adult Basic Education students: the document to be used as a guide for home economics instructors teaching this consumer component in all ABE programs in the state.

After consultation with adult education directors and the instructors, it was believed that these spin-off benefits would also result:

1. New ways of agencies working cooperatively might be determined.
2. A team-teaching approach in ABSE could enhance the total program.
3. Meeting APL objectives will enrich the ABE student's background in math, history, and economics, enabling him/her to meet GED requirements and have a more comprehensive "education".

PROCEDURE

Initial planning included three one-day sessions where instructors met with the State Vocational Home Economics Supervisor, and took part in a week long workshop on Consumer Education, sponsored by the Department of Public Instruction, at Bismarck. After these joint meetings they developed plans most compatible to the scheduling patterns and needs of the students at the two sites.

Evaluation was an on-going process. The Bismarck instructor included evaluation opportunities in each class session, while the Jamestown instructor provided evaluation devices for each packet, and evaluated verbally with each student. Two formal evaluations of the total project were held, and included input from the two instructors, two directors and the Home Economics Supervisor. Process changes were made in accordance with evaluation findings.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The overall project objectives were met in these ways:

1. Identify consumer education needs of a sample group of ABE students in North Dakota.

Consumer education needs of students involved were identified on an on-going basis through a variety of assessment techniques. (See appendix materials.) Those needs surfacing most frequently included:

Personal budgeting

Using banking services

Using consumer information resources

Consumer protection and redress

Advertising psychology

2. Assist students in reaching the APL goal "To Manage a Family Economy and Demonstrate an Awareness of Sound Purchasing Principles" by formulating and testing teaching methods geared to the 20 APL objectives and the students' own objectives.

The results of the activity were gratifying as students expressed a vital interest in and commitment to the learning experience. Approximately 45 adult students were exposed to some aspects of the program, with 20 being involved in all phases. All evaluations acknowledged participation a beneficial learning experience. Objective #2 has a never ending potential.

3. Document effective methods for teaching consumer education to Adult Basic Education students; the document to be used as a guide for home economics instructors teaching this consumer component in all ABE programs in the state.

Documentation of effective methods for teaching is contained in the appendix reports and materials. Copies of additional plans may be obtained from the instructors or Vocational Home Economics, state office.

The following generalizations were found to apply in regard to the project process:

1. Students most motivated in their work toward the GED were also most motivated to learn consumer concepts.
2. Adult students' enthusiasm toward consumer education is in proportion to their actual consumer experiences as adults.
3. Use of community resources, simulations and real life problem solving were most motivating teaching techniques.
4. Students who are not capable of completing the GED can gain basic financial skills through involvement in this program.
5. Active advertising and recruiting by ABSE director would result in larger classes. Many adults did not realize this segment was being offered.
6. A fixed meeting time each week, with replicated sessions in afternoon and evening would be best for a group oriented class.
7. Certificates of accomplishment (or other indicators) are important to adult learners. Many who have not achieved appreciably in the academic areas before, see these as tangible evidence of success in learning.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made by project personnel:

1. Consumer education curriculum, taught by a professional home economist, should become an integral part of the ABSE program.
2. ABSE directors should develop a plan for regularly advertising the course content and recruiting students.
3. Students unable to complete the GED program and those who have completed the program are prime candidates for consumer education. Special attention should be given to their recruitment.
4. Real life experiences and problem solving, or simulated exercises should be the teaching techniques used with adults in the consumer education program.
5. Self-contained lessons should be used to maintain learner satisfaction despite occasional absence from class.
6. Materials for three reading levels should be available for each lesson, and AV teaching aids must be screened to eliminate "talking down" to adults.
7. Tangible recognition of the adult's progress in the program should be awarded at designated intervals.

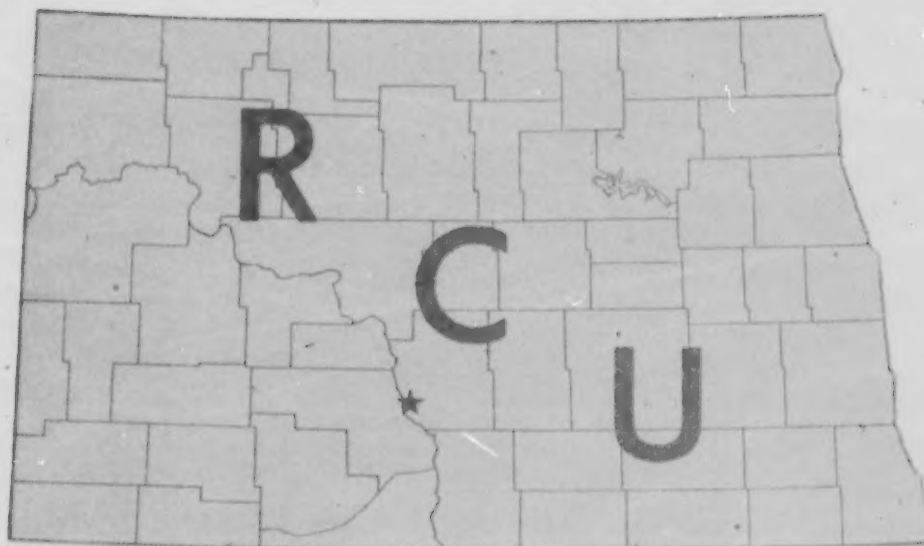
COST OF THE PROGRAM

A total of 45 students from the two programs were served for \$2,140* over the six-month period. This figure includes purchase of teaching aids for the amount of \$440. These aids have become a permanent part of the Bismarck-Jamestown programs.

*This was the cost in excess of amount spent on the regular ABSE classes.

INCORPORATION OF CONSUMER EDUCATION LESSONS IN ADULT BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN NORTH DAKOTA

PART II - APPENDICES



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APPENDIX 1

A REPORT ON:

INCORPORATION OF CONSUMER
EDUCATION IN THE JAMESTOWN
ADULT BASIC AND SECONDARY
EDUCATION PROGRAM

submitted by:

JANET WRIGHT
INSTRUCTOR, JAMESTOWN PROJECT

Jamestown's Consumer Education Pilot Program

By Janet Wright

The following report is divided into four parts: what the project consisted of, problems of the program, recommendations for continuing the program and evaluation of the program. There were approximately twenty people who took some of the packets to study. We are expecting ten to graduate at our recognition awards ceremony.

The project was set up in self-study units. There are ten units which consisted of buying foods, buying clothing, buying new and used automobiles, housing, budgeting, credit, insurance, consumer protection, home furnishings, and advertising. A sample of the units will be included in this report.

The student checked out the units to take home for study and returned it to the class room when finished. Each student received a certificate (a sample is included in the report) when the unit was returned and discussed with the instructor. When the student finished eight out of the ten units the student is considered a graduate of the course and will receive an award. (A sample of the award is also included in this report.)

Problems of the Program

The program met no immediate need in many of the students. The GED filled a need for getting a better job, better pay or better self-image. But, unless they were ready to buy a new home, buy a small appliance, etc., they had no real need to learn this information. Therefore, it was hard to encourage them to take the packets home to study when they had busy schedules at home.

Everyone of our students who came to class came to work on obtaining their GED. They had their goal set and their minds set on getting it. They were willing to give up time and energy on working towards this but not on the consumer education which filled no immediate goal.

The students who did finish the consumer education packets were the students who finished the GED and came back for another certificate.

The disappearance of the packets for too long a period was another problem encountered with the project. The length of time the packets were out depended upon the students attendance and many times our students were not regular attenders. Therefore the packets were not returned promptly and the students waiting for a certain packet may have lost interest.

Many of the younger students who attended high school within the last four to eight years have had courses in consumer education. These students found the material to be repetitious and did not feel it was worth the time to go over the material again.

The level of reading and comprehension in our classes vary a great deal. The packets did not meet everyones need, some were much too advanced and for others they were much too elementary.

Recommendations

There are several recommendations which will help this project reach more students. One immediate goal is to produce more levels of reading for our students on each subject area. We feel for most part the units available are intermediate level of reading. We need units which are for our more advanced students and also for our more elementary students. We are now losing many of our students due to lack of information or too much information at one time. The units have to be produced into at least three levels of learning.

Also, the units have to have a wider choice of materials for our students to use. The packets should incorporate tapes, individual viewers, etc. for a variant. These units would have to stay in the classroom but many of the units could still be taken home.

Packets being kept from the classroom for too long a period of time was another problem. This caused other students to wait for certain packets to return. The materials should be duplicated so we would have two to three copies of each unit and of each level. More students would receive the information without waiting.

The packets could be used more fully if discussion were a bigger element of evaluation. At the present time the student and one or two instructors discuss the unit. If the students were supplied with the packets to take home to complete and told that on a specific evening the unit would be discussed, the student would obtain more from the information. Discussion has always been a great teaching aid and it could be used more fully for this project.

The certificate should be continued both at the end of the units and for our awards ceremony. Students of any age and level seem to enjoy receiving a reward. I feel the ten students who are graduating were encouraged to finish by the certificates they received.

The project would have better attendance if the program were advertised in local newspapers. We advertised only once throughout the course of the project and feel monthly advertising or less would improve the

number of students using the packets. Advertising the GED program has increased the enrollment and advertising the consumer education packets would also increase the enrollment in this program.

Method of Evaluation

Throughout each packet there were tests given to evaluate the students learning process. The tests were written in a problem type situation.

Also, oral questions were asked after the students handed the packet in. The student and evaluator discussed the packets and during the discussions comments were made to indicate which students benefited from the packets and what information was most valuable to them.

VHE

VOCATIONAL CONSUMER-HOME ECONOMICS

THIS CERTIFIES THAT

_____ has successfully completed the requirements for

_____ and is therefore entitled to this

CERTIFICATE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT

_____ Date _____

ABE - CONSUMER EDUCATION

COMPLETION CREDIT

_____ has completed the Consumer Education packet on _____. This is the _____ packet finished. Completion of 8 packets will entitle the above named to a certificate to be awarded at the Annual Recognition Ceremonies for adults completing the GED and/or Consumer Education Course

_____ ABE Teacher

_____ Consumer Educator

APPENDIX 2

SAMPLE LEARNING PACKET

DEVELOPED BY JANET WRIGHT

FOR USE IN

INCORPORATION OF CONSUMER EDUCATION

IN THE

JAMESTOWN ADULT BASIC

AND SECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAM

CONSUMER PROTECTION PACKET

How to use this unit:

1. Read and answer the questions on the pretest. This test is to get you involved in thinking about the unit and also to give you some idea of what the unit will cover.
2. Read Chapter 10-Consumer Rights and Satisfaction Guaranteed-6.
3. Read "Avoid Deceit and Fraud", "Problems Facing the Consumer", "Who Complains", "Formal Redress", "How are Consumer Complaints Resolved", and "How to Complain Effectively".
4. Complete the four example problems.
5. Hand in the unit with your work.
6. Answer the questions on the post test with your instructor.

CONSUMER PROTECTION - Pretest

1. If your rights have not been protected you have the right to complain?
2. What is the first step in getting satisfaction when you purchase a faulty product?
3. What is the reason for keeping sales slips?
4. Have you as a consumer, found satisfaction when you have complained? If so, what steps were taken?



Do you know what to watch for when you buy?

What would you do if you had a complaint about something you bought?

Do you know where to take a complaint?

Have you ever had a problem with something you bought? Have you ever been dissatisfied? At one time or another almost everyone has. Here are some problems you may have been faced with.

- An item is not put together well.
- An appliance does not work properly.
- A bill seems too high.
- A job was not done right.
- You do not get what you thought you paid for.
- You have been gyped.

There are other buying problems, too. You can do something about some buying problems by making a consumer complaint.

As the buyer or consumer, you have a right to get satisfaction from whatever you buy. If you are not satisfied, you can complain. All over the country consumers are complaining—complaining about products and services they have paid for. Later, they find that they have wasted money on faulty products or shoddy service. More and more buyers are demanding satisfaction.

Information in this unit will explain what to look out for when you buy. It will suggest ways for you to get help if you have a complaint. Other information will tell you about buying services.

SATISFACTION GUARANTEED

6

Satisfaction Checklist

Do you look out for yourself? Part of knowing how to buy wisely is looking out for yourself. Do you know how to be a satisfied buyer? Why not find out? Below is a checklist. Answer yes or no to each question. Put a check in the box of your choice.

YES NO

- ☒ ☐ Do you buy from honest stores, businesses, and salesmen?
- ☒ ☐ Do you know some of the gimmicks used to get you to buy?
- ☒ ☐ Do you know when a salesman is pressuring you to buy?
- ☒ ☐ Can you tell when a salesman is trying to scare you into buying?
- ☒ ☐ Can you tell when a salesman is trying to trick you into buying?
- ☒ ☐ Do you always read a sales contract before signing it?

YES NO

- ☐ ☒ Do you understand everything in a contract before signing?
- ☐ ☒ Do you know what to do when you have a buying problem?
- ☒ ☐ Do you do something about your buying problems?
- ☒ ☐ Do you know some of the local places you can take a buying problem?
- ☒ ☐ Do you know some of the consumer protection laws?
- ☐ ☐ Do you know where to go if a seller is using unlawful selling practices?
- ☒ ☐ Do you ask questions when you buy a service?
- ☒ ☐ Do you know how to choose a repairman?
- ☒ ☐ Do you know how to choose a doctor or dentist?

Did you answer yes to all of the questions? If you did, you are probably a more satisfied buyer. Did you answer no to some of the questions? If so, you may need to learn more about protecting yourself. Become a more satisfied buyer. Read the information in this unit.

BUYER BEWARE

You can save money and be a more satisfied buyer. Be a selective shopper. Choose places to shop known for their good business practices. Ask a friend about where he shops. If he is satisfied with the store, you may be too. You can trust most stores. They are reputable. You can also trust most salesmen who have been fair in the past. Buy from sellers who have a good reputation. They will usually help you with any complaint. They want you to be a satisfied buyer.

Last Chance Deals

"Don't lose a good deal on one of the best stereos made. We just have a couple left! Buy now," the salesman said. Another salesman may say, "You won't find this deal again. It's your last chance."

Most "last chance" deals are best left alone. These kinds of deals are usually offered to customers in an attempt to get them to make hasty decisions. Decisions made in haste—when it comes to shopping—frequently turn out to be poor ones. The buyer sometimes finds out later that the item really doesn't suit his needs or that the item was not a good buy after all.

A wise consumer weighs the value of the purchase against the cost of the item. He considers carefully whether the item really suits his needs and whether he can afford it. Only after considering the cost, his needs, and the use of the item is a wise shopper ready to make the decision to purchase.

Scare Tactics

Will scare tactics work on you? A salesman may notice you looking at a display of fire alarms. He walks up to you and says, "Did you know fires kill 50,000 people a year? The smoke alone can kill you. I have an alarm here that could save you from a fire.

There is an old saying, "Let the buyer beware." ~~It means~~ ~~beware~~ of anything you do not trust or understand. There are some stores and salesmen who will try to trick you. They want you to think you are getting a good deal. Often you will pay too much for what you get. Sometimes you do not even get what you have paid for. These are the unfair, dishonest sellers. You can recognize such persons and not do business with them. The information which follows will help you recognize places not to shop.

It would be a good investment in your family's safety. Buy it today for \$59.62."

Of course, the salesman was using a scare tactic. He wanted the customer to believe the fire alarm was the only way to be saved from a fire. Salesmen use the same kind of tactics with many other items. They may convince a customer that his car is dangerous to drive unless he has something fixed immediately. A home owner may buy a new furnace because a salesman makes him believe his furnace is about to blow up.

Don't be bluffed by a fast-talking salesman. Get another opinion. Go somewhere else. You could check with several places. Compare opinions. Then decide what you really need to buy.



Free Offers and Other Gimmicks

"Hello, Mrs. Zeak, I'm taking a survey. Which of these magazines do you like best?" the salesman asked.

"I like *Daily Household* best," Mrs. Zeak answered.

"Well, Mrs. Zeak, I'd like to place this magazine in your home free. All you have to do is pay the postage and handling fees. This amounts to only a few cents a week," the salesman replied.

Salesmen may offer you gimmicks to get you to buy. It is his job to sell. That is how he earns his living. However, there is usually a catch when something is offered free. You may find you are paying for something offered free. For example, the few cents a week may add up to a big price.

There are some phrases that many salesmen use to get you to buy. Watch out for them. You may have heard some of these:

"I'm taking a survey . . ."

"You have a lucky phone number!"

"You can cancel any time . . ."

"Only a few cents a week . . ."

"You have been specially selected to display our product . . ."

"This will help your child in school . . ."

"This is a special price . . ."

"If you answer this question correctly . . ."

"You get these free with the purchase of . . ."

**Goben's Motors offering
a free TV with
a car purchase**

Referral Selling Plans

Mrs. Wise answered the knock at her door. "Hello, Mrs. Wise. I represent Super Sweep Vacuum Cleaners. I'm here to make you a



very special offer. How would you like a new vacuum cleaner? It's yours free. All you have to do is find me 25 customers," the salesman said.

Mrs. Wise was offered a referral selling plan. Referral selling is one of the most widely used sales gimmicks. Here is how it works. A salesman offers you something. He says you can pay for it by giving him names of friends. There is a catch. Usually only the friends who buy count toward money off on your purchase. You have to sign a contract. It says you will pay the full amount for the product if you cannot find customers for the salesman. Usually the product is overpriced. You pay too much for what you get.

Some states regulate laws on referral sales plans. In some states it is unlawful to use referral selling.

Unordered Merchandise

"Who sent us this box of greeting cards?" Mr. Watts said. He asked his wife if she ordered them. She had not.

"Here's a bill for \$1.98. I'm not going to pay this bill," Mr. Watts said. "I didn't order these cards."

Have you ever received something you did not order? Usually a letter comes with the package. It asks you to pay for the item. Mr. Watts is right. He does not have to pay

for something he did not order. If you get something in the mail you did not order, you can refuse to accept it. You can write "refused" on the package and send it back. You can also keep the package. You are not obligated to pay for it.

In some states it is unlawful to send a bill with unordered items. In any case, you do not have to pay for anything you did not order. Make sure no one else in your family has ordered the item, however.

Earn Money at Home Schemes

Here is an ad. You have probably seen many like it:

Earn Money at Home

Earn \$50.00 a week in your spare time! No experience necessary. Simply address label. Send \$1.00 for complete instructions. Watch your earnings grow!

Here is what happened to Mrs. Bates. She sent in her dollar for the instructions. A letter came which read:

Dear Mrs. Bates:

There are many ways you can earn \$50.00 a week. Each week address letters to 50 people you know. Ask them to pay \$1.00 for:

- * pies you make
- * baby booties you knit
- * ceramics you make
- * or anything else you do

For more information, Mrs. Bates, send us another \$1.00.

Sincerely yours,
Hughve Ben Hadd

The dishonest business has Mrs. Bates's dollar. Mrs. Bates has nothing for it.



There are many ways advertised for earning money at home. Some are honest deals. Many are not. Most honest offers do not ask that you pay anything or buy anything first.

Listed below are some of the items which could mean an earn-at-home deal is not good. Watch out for them.

- Promises of fantastic profits—a get-rich-quick scheme.
- No experience necessary. We provide training and equipment.
- Send money for materials, kits, and instructions.
- No names and addresses of people who have written about all the money they have earned.
- Advance payments to show "good faith."

Coupons

Mrs. Kale received a coupon in the mail. It was worth \$75 toward the purchase of a new sewing machine. Mrs. Kale bought the machine. She thought she got a good deal. But did she?

You do not always know if a coupon means a real savings. The company may raise the price of a product to cover the coupon. If so, the coupon is not a good deal. In some states, this practice is against the law. It is an example of false pricing. Sometimes the product is being sold for the same price minus the coupon offer. You could be getting a good deal. Always find out the original selling price. Then you will know if you are getting a good deal. Do some shopping around first.

Franchises

Jim Brooks read this ad:

Be your own boss and build a business.
Sell a well-known home fire extinguisher
be the only salesman in your area.
Write for franchise details today.

A franchise is a right to sell a product. A person usually has to pay a company for the franchise. Some franchise deals are dishonest. You may not have to pay much at first. But many times you have to pay more later. Find out all you can about the product being sold.

Always be very sure of a product before you agree to sell it. Don't sign anything before you contact the local Chamber of Commerce or the Better Business Bureau. They have records of complaints about bad businesses. In many states there are definite laws dealing with the sale of products and franchises. Be certain what you are being offered is a legal business deal.

Contracts

A contract is a legal agreement. Most contracts are signed by the two parties or persons involved. ~~With some items you buy, there is a contract. Have a good understanding of the contract you are going to sign.~~ Here are five points to think about:

1. Make contracts with honest people.

Be sure you make contracts with honest people. Buy from a seller who has a good reputation. Always read the contract very carefully. Do not let the salesman tell you any part is not important. He may be trying to trick you.

2. Read contracts.

Before you sign any contract, understand every part of it. When you are thinking of signing one, first take it home to read. Ask someone you trust to explain any question you may have.

3. Have all agreements written down.

Get everything in writing. Have all agreements written down. If a salesman makes an agreement or promises something not included in the contract, be sure that it is down in writing with his signature. Every part of the promise or agreement should be written into the contract. Verbal agreements cannot be proven if they need to be.

4. Make sure there are no blank spaces.

Never leave blank spaces in a contract. This prevents salesmen from changing the contract by adding something later into the blank areas. If any portion of the contract does not apply, be sure that it is completely crossed out.

5. Don't make promises you can't keep.

A good salesman will take the time to explain a contract to you. If you are in doubt about a contract, do not sign. Have someone else explain it to you so that you understand exactly what the contract means. Never sign anything until you are sure of it. Your signature is your legal promise to pay.

What Buyers Have Trouble with Most

Below is a list of things that buyers often complain about. The complaints are either with the item, service, or type of selling practice. Watch out for them.

- Books and magazines (door-to-door salesmen and telephone offers)
- Freezer meat and food service plans
- Home improvement deals (usually door-to-door salesmen offering to fix the roof, furnace, or put siding on the house)

List below the problems you have had with items, services, or selling practices. Did you do anything about your problems? Did you complain? If not, list the reasons why you did not do anything. Then read the next pages of this unit.

- Vacuum cleaners (usually door-to-door salesmen)
- Non-delivery of merchandise (often mail-order schemes)
- Auto repair
- Credit (borrowing money)
- Furniture and appliances (poor quality for the money and trouble with parts)
- Automobiles and warranties (often with used cars)
- Franchise deals

Consult your telephone directory for information on the telephone number and office address of your local Chamber of Commerce and Better Business Bureau. Write the numbers and addresses below.

THE BUYER'S PROTECTION

These three people have buying problems. How would you react, or what would you do in each situation?



1. Ted Moss took his car into the service station. He needed to have the front brakes repaired. He thought he would have a \$30.00 bill to pay. When he picked his car up, he found the bill was \$70.00! The garage mechanic had replaced the back brakes, too. "But," Ted Moss said, "I didn't tell you to fix the back brakes."

It was not right for the garage mechanic to fix the back brakes. Ted Moss had not told him to do it. Now that the work had been done, what can Mr. Moss do?



2. Mary Storm bought a dress. When she got it home, she noticed a flaw in the material. She took it back to the store where she bought it. The salesclerk told her she could not exchange the dress. Neither could she get her money back.

Mrs. Storm noticed something was wrong with the dress she bought. She did something about it. She took it back to the store. But the salesclerk would not help her with her problem. What should Mrs. Storm do?



3. A door-to-door salesman sold Jane White a set of pots and pans. The set cost nearly \$300. As an added bonus, Jane was given a free set of china. When the china came, some of the pieces were chipped. Jane received the bill. It was more than she was told she would have to pay.

Jane White had some chipped china. She had a bigger bill than she expected to pay. What should she do about it?

Doing Something about a Buying Problem



What can you or any consumer do about a buying problem? You can "make the seller be fair" and demand satisfaction.

You can complain when you aren't satisfied with something you bought. You should complain when a seller has not been fair or honest.

More people are doing something about making the seller be fair. Many people have buying problems. However, some do nothing about them. They may not "do anything" because of several reasons. Some people don't know they have a buying problem. Or, they do not want to take the time to look into a buying problem. Others do nothing because they don't want to cause any trouble. Some people are shy or afraid to complain. They don't think anyone will want to listen. A number of people who have buying problems don't know where to complain. Still others simply do not want to admit to being "taken."

Don't let your buying problems go unsolved. No matter how small the problem may seem, do something about it. You should get satisfaction from purchases you make. The following information tells you what you can do about buying problems.

Go to the Seller First

Often you can have your problem corrected by going to the seller or company first. Many times a problem was just a mistake. Usually the store, seller, or company is happy to correct the problem.

Most stores and companies want you to be a satisfied customer. Remember, though, you have to go to them with a problem. They will not be aware of your problem unless you notify them.

If you can go to the seller, here are the steps to take:

1. Get the facts together: sales slip, labels, warranties, guarantees, and contract, if any.
2. Take all of these and the item, if it is small enough, to the seller.
3. Ask to see the salesman who sold you the item.
4. Explain your problem to the salesman.
5. If he cannot help you, go to the store manager or customer service department.

If you have to write a company or return an item by mail:

1. Find the right name and address of the company. (A librarian can help you with the name and address.)
2. Write a letter to the company. Give the brand name, model number, or any other information. This will tell the company what product you are writing about.
3. Explain what is wrong with the product. If you are returning the product, make sure you package it carefully.
4. You should hear from the company in two or three weeks.
5. It is sometimes better to write the company for mailing instructions before sending the item for their attention. They usually will give you specific instructions about packing, wrapping, and addressing the package.

Sometimes a seller or company will not help you with your problem. There are other people and places that will. Don't stop with the seller or company if you do not get satisfaction! Here are names of local people and places to contact. Most will give you free advice and help.

Consumer Leagues and Action Lines

If you are not satisfied with your purchase, call your local consumer league. Many communities have these citizen groups. Sometimes they are called consumer action lines. These organizations or groups handle consumer complaints. They help the buyer get what he paid for. Call these groups with any kind of complaint—big or small.

The Chamber of Commerce

Most villages and cities will have a chamber of commerce. This agency helps promote honesty in business. It is concerned with the business interests in an area. People at this agency keep track of sellers in an area. They can tell you whether or not a store, person, or company is honest and fair. Check with this agency before buying from a seller or company you know nothing about. The people there can also help you "iron out" a complaint. They can discuss the buying problem with you and the seller.

The Better Business Bureau

A branch of the Better Business Bureau (BBB) is located in larger cities. However, its services are open to everyone. If you have a complaint, the BBB will ask you to put it in writing. It will then take the matter up with the seller. A BBB officer can also give you information on companies and sellers. The Better Business Bureau can help you tell the difference between the honest and the dishonest sellers.

Farm and Home Extension Agents

County extension agents can help with many problems you may have. They can give you advice about what to do with your buying problem. If they do not have the answer, they can send you to someone who might be able to help you.

Mayor or Other City Official

Even if you live in a small town, you can discuss your complaint with the mayor. He may be someone who can help you. He may know another official in the town who may be able to help you.

Your Local Bank

Officials at a bank might be able to help. They can give you advice. They know the complete business picture in most places.

Letter to the Editor

Most newspapers print letters their readers send in. Many newspapers are willing to point out problems in a community. Your letter would most likely get action from the seller.

A Trusted Friend

Sometimes a friend can help you. Together you can decide what to do about your problem.

In the spaces below, list the places in your area where you could take complaints. Write in the addresses and telephone number with the places. Sometimes sellers will not give you satisfaction. In such cases, call one of these places for help.



Place: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Phone: _____

Place: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Phone: _____

Place: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Phone: _____

Place: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Phone: _____

Place: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Phone: _____

Place: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Phone: _____

LEGAL PLACES TO TAKE YOUR COMPLAINTS

Consumer Protection

Some sellers use fraudulent selling practices. By using such practices, these sellers cheat the buyer. There are laws against fraudulent selling. The laws protect the buyer.

In most states, the departments of justice and agriculture work to stop fraudulent schemes. These departments also help write the laws of the state dealing with consumer protection. Every state has its own consumer protection laws. The laws vary from state to state. Write to your state departments of justice and agriculture for information about specific consumer laws in your state.

Local officials can act on your complaint if you think a seller is using an unlawful selling practice. If you think you have been gypped by a seller, contact your county district attorney, sheriff, or police. These officials can help stop fraudulent selling practices. They are ready and willing to try to help you.

The district attorney, sheriff, or police will listen to any complaint you have. They will hear your complaint and often act upon it. Your complaint may involve the violation of a law.

Some salesmen must have a vendor's license before they can sell in an area. Usually the salesman gets it from the county sheriff. It is against the law to sell many things without this license or permit to sell. If you have any questions or complaints about a seller, call your sheriff. When a salesman comes to your door, ask him if he has a license to sell. He should be ready and willing to show you his permit. If he seems unwilling, or unable to comply with the law, don't do business with him.



Small Claims Court

You can take your problem to small claims court. You can sue the seller in this court. Such a court proceeding is inexpensive to use. You may not have to pay anything if you win the case. If you lose, you will probably have to pay a small court fee. The judge conducts the hearing, and you usually do not need an attorney. After hearing both sides in a case, the judge may only offer good advice. Sometimes he will state a fine. Never be afraid to use this court. Many problems are settled here without a lot of "fuss and red tape."

Write the name and telephone number of your sheriff and district attorney in the space below.

Sheriff

telephone

District attorney

telephone

There are federal agencies to help protect the consumer. They help make the laws and regulations. The regulations they make are enforced in every state.

The following three federal agencies work closely with state organizations to provide better service and protection for consumers.

- ## Just being mad does not help!

available to help solve consumer problems.

What have you been doing to protect yourself as a buyer? You should demand satisfaction. How can you be a more satisfied buyer? Write your comments in the space below.

SERVICES



Some services you buy are haircuts, shoe repairs, auto repairs, electricity, telephone service, dry cleaning, doctor's care, insurance, and even education.

Many services are bought "unseen." They cannot be examined or handled like items in a department store. A haircut is completed before you can tell if the barber is good. A service call on an appliance is finished before you know if the workman can do the job. And, you probably won't know if your insurance is good until you turn in the first claim. These are only a few examples of services the consumer deals with.

One way to help you know what to expect from the service is to ask questions.

- Who will do the service?
- What will it include?
- What will it cost?
- Will the work be guaranteed?
- When will it be done or how long will it take?

Each time you buy a service, ask questions. Find out what kind of service you will get. It is wise buying, and you will be more satisfied!

Repair Services

Before you call a repairman, check to see if he is really needed. You may be able to solve the problem or make the repairs without help. Consider what happened to the York family.

"Mom, the TV won't come on," yelled Bill York.

"I hope it's not going to be an expensive repair," answered Bill's mother. Mrs. York checked the switch knob. She looked at the connecting wire in back of the set. Everything looked all right to her.

"Hey, Mom, look! It's only unplugged," Bill said.

"Well, thank goodness," said Mrs. York. "I'm glad I didn't call a serviceman. We would have wasted money on a service call!"



DO NOT FILM THIS PAGE

Remember, when something stops working, there is a chance you can fix it yourself, as Mrs. York did. Repair services can be expensive. Check first before calling a repairman. You might pay for a service call and have the repairman do nothing more than plug in the connecting cord.

When an electrical appliance stops working, look to see if it is still plugged in. Are switches set right? Has a fuse blown? Is a part jammed? Could the instruction book help?

You can save on many repair bills by fixing something yourself. There are books at your public library on how to make household repairs. Do-it-yourself books will tell you how to:

- Check the oil, gas, lights, and battery of a car
- Fix electrical plugs and sockets
- Unstick doors and drawers
- Fix stopped up toilets and drains
- Replace or reset a fuse
- Take care of most electrical appliances
- Fix leaky faucets and toilet tanks
- Check radio and TV tubes

When you are trying to fix something, remember these things. Read the instruction

book, if you have one. Find out if you have been doing something wrong. If you think you can fix what is wrong, try it. However, be very careful. You may harm yourself in trying to save money by fixing it yourself. Never hurry the job. Take your time and do your best. Check your work as you go along. Be pretty sure you can fix something before you take it apart. You may make the problem worse. Call a serviceman for repairs you cannot do.

Before you call the repairman, there are a few things that should be done. Check the factory's instructions and warranty on repairs. These will tell you what parts are covered by the warranty. Some products are repaired only at a repair center. In this case, you will have to take or send the item to the center. The centers are usually listed with the instructions. Many items, however, can be repaired by a local serviceman.

Try to find the model number of the item needing repair. It is also good to know the date you bought the item. The information will help the service people. If you have kept such materials as warranties and guarantees, you probably also have kept the sales slip or proof of purchase. Many problems can be avoided if the buyer keeps these important items.



Select the Repairman Carefully

Most repair services are expensive. You want a repairman who does good work at a fair price. If you do not know a good place, check around. Ask your friends to suggest a reputable shop. Ask a seller to recommend a good service place. Check the guarantee on parts and labor at several shops. Before you contact a service shop, call your Chamber of Commerce or Better Business Bureau. Ask if any complaints have been made about the place.

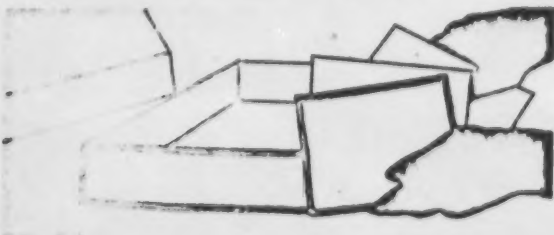
You Should Know What To Expect from the Service Center

Tell the repairman what you need fixed. Ask for a written estimate on the cost of repairs, including parts and labor. This will give you an idea how much you will have to pay.

When the repairs have been made, ask for an itemized bill. An itemized bill tells exactly what was done and what parts were replaced. The total bill should be close to the cost estimate. A repairman should not make more repairs than needed or estimated. Check to see that everything is working before you pay the bill.

Keep Sales Bills and Guarantees

Have a special place you put all major and minor appliance information. You should keep sales slips, instruction booklets, guarantees, warranties, and contracts. You may very often need any one of them. Instructions should be read periodically just to be sure you are operating appliances properly.



1. Always have guarantees in writing.
2. What does the guarantee include? (Will repairs be made on damaged parts? Will broken parts be replaced? Will you get your money back for parts that do not work? Does the guarantee include the whole product or only parts? Is labor included and for how long?)
3. Who is making the guarantee—the seller or the manufacturer?
4. How long does the guarantee last? Lifetime guarantees should be clear. Is the guarantee good for your lifetime or the product's lifetime?
5. Will all your money be returned on "money back" guarantees?
6. Know the time limit on unconditionally guaranteed products.
7. Guaranteed products are the same as unconditionally guaranteed. When something is wrong, you can get your money back. Or the product will be replaced or repaired for you.
8. Is the guarantee pro-rated? In a pro-rated guarantee, the amount of use is deducted from the current retail price.

Professional Services

The most common professional services include those of doctors, dentists, and lawyers.

Everyone needs a doctor or a dentist at some time. When you choose a doctor or dentist, make sure you select one to fit your needs. There are different kinds of doctors and dentists. A generalist or general practitioner is a medical doctor. He treats most diseases and illnesses. If a general practitioner cannot help you, he will send you to a specialist. A specialist concentrates on one area of medicine. For example, a pediatrician is a children's doctor. A neurologist specializes in nervous disorders and diseases in the human nervous system.

The telephone book has a full list of doctors and dentists. See the yellow page section called Physicians and Surgeons. You will find Doctors of Medicine (M.D.) and various types of specialists. Another section will include Dentists—Doctors of Dental Surgery (D.D.S.). You can also call the local medical or dental association. They will give you the name of the doctor or dentist nearest you.

When choosing a doctor or dentist, there are several things you should consider. What do other people think of the doctor or dentist? A satisfied patient will gladly recommend his doctor to someone else. You ought to find out what the medical or dental costs are. You will be interested to know regular office hours for either the doctor or the dentist. You should also find out if you must make an appointment before you go in. It might be good to know if the doctor will make house calls in case you considered it necessary. You should also find out what hospital the doctor uses.

In some places it is rather difficult to find a doctor or dentist who is taking new patients. If this happens to you, call the local

medical or dental association and ask them for assistance. They should be able to tell you the name of a doctor or dentist who can accept you as a patient.

Avoid the Medical Quack

The medical quack sells hope—hope for a quick cure to your illness. He may call himself a doctor and may even have diplomas on his walls. However, always look for these letters on the diplomas: M.D. They mean medical doctor. An M.D. has gone to a reputable medical college and has successfully completed his training. He has a license to practice medicine. The medical quack has no license, and he cannot legally prescribe medicines. Avoid quacks.

For information about free medical help, see the book in this series called *Where To Go, Who To See, What To Do*.



Legal Services

Lawyers also should be chosen for their honesty and good service. A list of lawyers can be found in the telephone book. Look in the yellow pages under the heading Attorney-at-Law. For information about legal aid, read the book in this series called *Where To Go, Who To See, What To Do*.

Financial Services

Financial services are such items as insurance, banking, credit, investments, income tax, and accounting services. These services are difficult for some people to understand. Sometimes the consumer is confused about insurance benefits and coverages. Many do not know the best way to borrow money and make investments. The best advice is to buy only from someone you know and trust.

Always understand the terms of a financial service before you buy. Read the coverage and benefits of insurance. Read credit and other contracts carefully. Know exactly how much you will have to pay. Make sure you know what you are paying for.

To find out more about these items read the book in this series called *Family Money Management*.

NOTES

CHAPTER 10

CONSUMER RIGHTS

IN THIS CHAPTER WE WILL LOOK AT WHAT YOU CAN DO IF YOU FEEL YOU HAVE BEEN GYPPED OR "RIPPED OFF" BY SOMEONE. WHAT WE WILL BE DOING IS TRYING TO SHOW SOME OF THE RIGHTS THAT YOU HAVE AS A CONSUMER AND WHERE YOU CAN GO TO MAKE SURE YOUR RIGHTS HAVE BEEN PROTECTED.

YOUR CONSUMER RIGHTS

WHAT ARE YOUR CONSUMER RIGHTS? TO LIST THEM ALL OR TO LIST ALL OF THE LAWS WHICH PROTECT YOU AS A CONSUMER WOULD TAKE SEVERAL HUNDRED PAGES. YOU REALLY HAVE ONE BASIC RIGHT AS A CONSUMER: YOU CAN EXPECT THAT WHEN YOU BUY A PRODUCT THAT PRODUCT WILL PERFORM THE TASK YOU BOUGHT IT FOR. HOW THIS RIGHT IS MAINTAINED AND HOW IT IS UNDERSTOOD IS STILL IN QUESTION AND THE QUESTIONS ARE WHAT CAUSES SO MANY LAWS TO BE WRITTEN ABOUT CONSUMER RIGHTS. HOW LONG SHOULD THE PRODUCT LAST? HOW SAFE SHOULD THE PRODUCT BE? THESE ARE BUT TWO COMMON QUESTIONS CONSUMERS ASK ABOUT PRODUCTS.

THERE ARE SOME GENERAL RULES YOU SHOULD FOLLOW SO THAT YOU PROTECT YOUR RIGHTS:

1. KNOW WHAT CONSUMER RIGHTS YOU DO HAVE.
2. KNOW EXACTLY WHAT YOU ARE BUYING AND HOW MUCH IT WILL COST BEFORE PAYING FOR IT.

3. KEEP RECORDS (SALES SLIPS, CANCELLED CHECKS, ETC.) OF YOUR PURCHASES.
4. READ THE WARRANTIES THAT COME WITH THE PRODUCT. IF YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND THEM ASK QUESTIONS!
5. IF YOU FEEL YOUR RIGHTS HAVE NOT BEEN PROTECTED COMPLAIN!

PROTECTING CONSUMER RIGHTS

IF YOU FEEL YOUR RIGHTS HAVE NOT BEEN PROTECTED YOU SHOULD COMPLAIN. BUT YOU MUST KNOW WHO TO COMPLAIN TO. FOR BEST RESULTS ON A CONSUMER COMPLAINT THERE ARE A SERIES OF STEPS YOU SHOULD FOLLOW TO GET ACTION:

1. GO TO THE PLACE WHERE YOU BOUGHT THE PRODUCT. TALK TO THE MANAGER AND EXPLAIN THE SITUATION. IF YOU ARE POLITE AND HAVE A REASONABLE COMPLAINT NINE OUT OF TEN TIMES THE STORE WILL TAKE CARE OF YOUR COMPLAINT RIGHT AWAY. IF THEY WILL NOT TAKE CARE OF THE SITUATION TO YOUR SATISFACTION ASK THEM FOR THEIR REASONS AND THEN LEAVE. DO NOT YELL, SCREAM OR THREATEN ANYONE OR YOU MIGHT FIND YOURSELF IN MORE TROUBLE THAN BEFORE.
2. WRITE TO THE MANUFACTURER OF THE PRODUCT. TELL THEM YOUR STORY AND SEND THEM COPIES OF YOUR SALES SLIP AND OTHER INFORMATION. DO NOT SEND YOUR ONLY COPY OF A SALES SLIP! WAIT TWO OR THREE WEEKS FOR AN ANSWER AND IF YOU DO NOT HEAR FROM THEM SEND THE SAME LETTER AGAIN ASKING TO HEAR FROM THEM. IF YOU HAVE NOT HEARD FROM THEM IN TWO WEEKS GO ON TO THE NEXT STEP.
3. GO TO SEE OR WRITE TO YOUR LOCAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND

- EXPLAIN THE SITUATION TO THEM. THEY MAY OR MAY NOT BE ABLE TO HELP, BUT SOMETIMES THEY CAN TALK TO THE STORE MANAGER AGAIN.
4. IF YOU STILL HAVE NO SOLUTION TO YOUR PROBLEM WRITE TO THE CONSUMER FRAUD DIVISION OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE IN BISMARCK. THIS OFFICE ACCEPTS AND WILL INVESTIGATE ALL THE COMPLAINTS IT RECEIVES. IT IS VERY GOOD FOR CASES OF FRAUD.
 5. WRITE TO A FEDERAL AGENCY. THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HAS MANY AGENCIES SET UP TO DEAL WITH COMPLAINTS FOR DIFFERENT TYPES OF PRODUCTS. SOME OF THESE ARE:
 - A) FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION: HANDLES COMPLAINTS ABOUT FALSE ADVERTISING
 - B) FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION: TESTS THE SAFETY OF FOOD AND DRUGS
 - C) CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION: WORKS TO GET RID OF UNSAFE PRODUCTS THAT ARE FOR SALE
 6. IF ALL OF THE ABOVE STEPS FAIL AND YOU FEEL VERY STRONGLY ABOUT YOUR PROBLEM YOU MAY WANT TO GO TO COURT. IF THE AMOUNT IS QUITE SMALL YOU CAN GO TO YOUR LOCAL SMALL CLAIMS COURT. IN THIS COURT YOU NEED NO LAWYER. YOU TELL YOUR SIDE AND THE MERCHANT TELLS HIS SIDE. THE JUDGE THEN MAKES HIS DECISION. IF IT IS A LARGE AMOUNT YOU WILL PROBABLY WANT TO SEE A LAWYER AND GO ON HIS ADVICE.

REMEMBER, IF YOUR RIGHTS HAVE NOT BEEN PROTECTED YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO COMPLAIN. DO SO POLITELY, BUT FIRMLY AND YOU WILL USUALLY FIND THAT THE PROBLEM WILL BE SOLVED.

AVOID DECEIT & FRAUD

GEORGIA C. SMITH
Home Management Specialist

Each year, more and more people are exposed to a variety of selling techniques. The great majority of them are fair and honest, but for those that are not thousands of dollars are lost, leaving behind frustrated and unhappy consumers.

Both business and consumers have responsibilities to make the marketing systems work. Consumers should recognize some of the warning signals of selling schemes and be prepared to act accordingly. Know the law governing the practice and where to report. Warning signals imply that you:

- Have been especially selected.
- You get something free . . . or at least far below regular price.
- You must sign something, but don't need to read it.
- You can make high earnings . . . no experience or skills are needed.
- A person uses a phony story to gain entrance to your home and then you find out he is selling something.
- Salesman in a hurry . . . leaving you no time to check out local business to compare.

Common Deceptive Selling Schemes:

BAIT & SWITCH - A product is advertised at a very low price. When you want to buy the item, it is downgraded by the seller, and the seller attempts to sell you a more expensive item. He strongly encourages you to buy a higher-priced similar item.



EARN MONEY AT HOME - These schemes all have one thing in common. They require you to buy something before you can begin to work. Ads are meant to sell information. For a small fee, you get a booklet explaining the offer, next you are given a chance to buy unstamped double postcards which offer some product or service. You mail the postcards to people you pick and if any of the cards are filled in with an order, you receive a commission. No money is paid merely for addressing and mailing the cards. The following is an example:

\$ 1.00	for information
5.00	250 postcards
6.00	
15.00	paid by you to the promoter for stamps for postcards
\$21.00	total money you spend
2.00	your commission on two orders
\$19.00	total loss to you

BUYING BY MAIL - Each year, hundreds of thousands shop by mail and find it a convenient, satisfactory way to satisfy their shopping needs. There are however, mail order shopping schemes.

Follow these mail order shopping tips:

- Beware of exaggerated claims for products or unrealistically low prices for merchandise.
- Carefully read catalogs. Keep a copy of the ad or brochure you order from.
- Before ordering, find out if the merchandise is offered on a satisfaction guaranteed basis.
- Place your order at least 4 weeks before you want the merchandise.
- Pay by check or money order and be sure to include any shipping and handling charges. Never send cash through the mails.
- Be sure to clearly indicate your name and address.



- Keep a record of your order, including name and address of company, date you placed the order, your cancelled check or number of money order.
- Check your order promptly upon receipt. Notify the company at once if the item is not satisfactory.

HOME IMPROVEMENTS - Because most homeowners do have need for major repairs or remodeling at one time or another, making you aware that there are dishonest practices may save you some money and unsatisfactory work. When faced by a home improvement salesman, the most important rule is: Do not let any salesman talk you into repairs you do not really need or want.



- Check with your local building supplier; he may suggest several contractors.
- Ask contractors if work would be done by their full-time crew or by subcontractors. Generally speaking, a firm that uses only subcontractors will use cheap labor and materials, so establish where the responsibility for satisfactorily completed work will be.
- Do not be deceived by a name - unethical home remodelers may use names of nationally recognized products in their business name to indicate some connection when in fact, no connection exists.
- Ask representatives of companies to give you names of previous customers in the area with whom they've done business.
- Accompany salesman on inspection of your property where work is to be done.
- Beware of scare tactics, model home tricks, referral schemes, or statement of interest document. Don't sign anything until you know you understand and agree to the full contract. Be sure all the blanks are filled in where appropriate or a line drawn through the space, all promises of the contractor are included in writing, specifications, supplies, prices, and deadline dates, that the contractor will obtain the necessary building permits or licenses, that the contractor and workers are covered by workmens' compensation and liability insurance, and waivers of lien, which means that those supplying labor and materials to your contractor give up their right to claim part of your property.



FREE GIFT - If you should "win a prize", it should cost you nothing to collect it. A store credit for \$50 is often good for nothing . . . prices are usually raised to offset the amount. Beware of the door-to-door salesman who asks questions about the ages of your children, where they go to school and what reference books you have to "help" them at home.

Soon he is describing the wonderful set of encyclopedia books he can give you free if you pay only \$29.95 a year for ten years for quarterly supplements. The clincher to the sale is when the salesman offers a free dictionary if you sign up today.

UNDERSTAND THE GUARANTEE - There is no law that says the manufacturer has to guarantee his product. A guarantee, however, makes a product more appealing to the buyer. The problem for the buyer is to be able to identify legitimate advertising of guarantees. "Guaranteed for 3 Years" means little unless the buyer understands what part or parts of the item is guaranteed, under what conditions of use, whether labor for replacement or repair is included, and what the buyer should do if they have a problem with the item.

WHEN IS A BARGAIN - A BARGAIN?

If a salesman says, "Our carpeting is commercial, heavy-duty, hotel quality carpeting, you usually can't buy for your home", watch out. If he adds,

"We just happen to have some of this fine carpeting left over from a big motel job", don't be fooled. And if he says, "You've got to act fast to get this deal because there are several looking at this", don't you believe it. The carpeting is just regular, run-of-the-mill carpeting you can buy in several reputable stores for the same price or even less. The fact this merchant has lots of carpeting for sale and may be in a hurry to sell it, doesn't mean you should be in a hurry. A reputable dealer will give you all the time you need to make a selection that will give you years of satisfaction.

Don't buy until you have compared quality and prices.

Don't sign anything until you have read and understand all print on the contract.

"If Something Seems To Be Just Too Good To Be True, It Probably Is!"
"Look Before You Leap"



COUNTY COOPERATIVE EXTENSION OFFICES

ADAMS Courthouse Hettinger	FOSTER Courthouse Carrington	MOUNTRAIL Memorial Bldg. Stanley	SHERIDAN Courthouse McClusky
BARNES Courthouse Valley City	GOLDEN VALLEY Courthouse Beach	FT. BERTHOLD Reynolds Bldg. New Town	SIOUX L & T Office Bldg. Fort Yates
BENSON Courthouse Minnewaukan	GRAND FORKS Courthouse Grand Forks	NELSON Courthouse Lakota	SLOPE Courthouse Amidon
BILLINGS Post Office Dickinson	GRANT Courthouse Carson	OLIVER Fed. Bldg. Center	STARK Post Office Bldg. Dickinson
BOTTINEAU Courthouse Bottineau	GRIGGS Courthouse Cooperstown	PEMBINA Courthouse Cavaler	STEELE Courthouse Finley
BOWMAN Courthouse Bowman	HETTINGER Courthouse Mott	PIERCE Courthouse Rugby	STUTSMAN Post Office Jamestown
BURKE Courthouse Bowbells	KIDDER Wolpert Bldg. Steele	RAMSEY Courthouse Devils Lake	TOWNER Courthouse Cando
BURLEIGH 1303 Central Ave. Bismarck	LAMOURE Courthouse LaMoure	RANSOM Courthouse Lisbon	TRAILL Courthouse Hillsboro
CASS 702 Main Ave. Fargo	LOGAN Courthouse Napoleon	RENVILLE Courthouse Mohall	WALSH Box 29 Park River
CAVALIER Courthouse Langdon	MCHENRY Memorial Bldg. Towner	RICHLAND Courthouse Wahpeton	WARD Courthouse Minot
DICKEY Courthouse Ellendale	MCINTOSH Courthouse Ashley	ROLETTE Office Bldg. Rolia	WELLS Office Bldg. Fessenden
DIVIDE Courthouse Crosby	MCKENZIE Co. Ag. Bldg. Watford City	SARGENT Courthouse Forman	WILLIAMS Courthouse Williston
DUNN County Office Bldg. Killdeer	MCLEAN Courthouse Washburn	STATE OFFICE Morrill Hall - NDSU Fargo, N. Dak.	
EDDY Courthouse New Rockford	MERCER Bank Bldg. Beulah		
EMMONS Courthouse Linton	MORTON Courthouse Mandan		

EXAMPLE

A BABY WAS CRYING, THE PHONE WAS RINGING, AND A KETTLE OF WATER WAS ABOUT TO BOIL OVER. IN ADDITION TO ALL THAT THERE WAS A MAGAZINE SALESMAN AT THE FRONT DOOR. SUSAN FELT THE WORLD WAS CAVING IN ON HER.

SUSAN HADN'T BEEN MARRIED LONG. HER HUSBAND, BILL, WAS A SERVICE MANAGER AT A LOCAL GARAGE AND EARNED ABOUT \$10,000 A YEAR. THEY HAD CAR PAYMENTS, RENT TO PAY AND THE NORMAL EXPENSES OF A YOUNG FAMILY. BUT THEY FELT THEY COULD MAKE IT - EVEN THOUGH THEY HAD TO WATCH THEIR MONEY VERY CLOSELY.

"PLEASE EXCUSE ME," SAID SUSAN TO THE SALESMAN, "THE BABY IS CRYING AND I'VE GOT TO ANSWER THE PHONE. I'M NOT REALLY INTERESTED IN GETTING ANY MAGAZINES." WHEN SHE RETURNED SEVERAL MINUTES LATER, THE SALESMAN HAD COME RIGHT IN AND TAKEN A SEAT IN THE LIVING ROOM.

"I'D LIKE TO SHOW YOU THESE FABULOUS BOOKS WHICH WILL MAKE A WONDERFUL ADDITION TO YOUR CHILD'S LIBRARY," HE SAID. "NO CHILD SHOULD BE DEPRIVED OF THESE BOOKS. I THINK YOU WILL AGREE THEY ARE REALLY BEAUTIFUL." THE SALESMAN TOLD SUSAN THAT HE SOLD BOOKS DURING THE DAY AND WORKED IN A FACTORY AT NIGHT IN ORDER TO MAKE ENDS MEET.

ALMOST BEFORE SHE REALIZED WHAT WAS HAPPENING, SUSAN BOUGHT A SET. THE SALESMAN TOLD HER TO SIGN THE FORM, AND SUSAN PROMPTLY DID.

SEVERAL HOUSE LATER, SUSAN READ THE FORM, AND FOUND THAT IT SAID, "COST OF \$10 DOWN AND \$10 A MONTH FOR SIX MONTHS." SUDDENLY SHE FELT SICK INSIDE. HOW WAS SHE GOING TO EXPLAIN THIS TO BILL, AND WHERE WERE THEY GOING TO COME UP WITH THE MONEY?

1. WHAT MISTAKES DID SUSAN MAKE? _____

2. WHAT IS MEANT BY A "THREE-DAY COOLING OFF PERIOD"?

3. IS THERE ANYTHING SUSAN CAN DO AFTER SIGNING THE CONTRACT?

EXAMPLE

JACKIE WRIGHT WAS GOING TO BE SIXTEEN ON SATURDAY AND SHE PLANNED ON HAVING A SMALL PARTY FOR SEVERAL OF HER FRIENDS. SHE THOUGHT SHE WOULD DO SOMTHING DIFFERENT INSTEAD OF HAVING THE USUAL SOFT DRINKS, POTATO CHIPS AND PIZZA. JACKIE WAS GOING TO BUY SOMETHING THAT WAS NUTRITIONAL. SHE DECIDED TO HAVE FRUIT--APPLES AND GRAPES.

ON SATURDAY MORNING JACKIE'S MOM DROVE HER TO THE 20TH STREET FARM MARKET. THE MAN IN CHARGE SHOWED JACKIE SOME HEALTHY-LOOKING GREEN GRAPES AND A QUARTER BUSHEL OF EATING APPLES. THEY BOTH LOOKED GOOD. HE ASSURED JACKIE THAT ALL OF HIS FRUIT WAS FRESH AND IN FIRST-CLASS CONDITION.

THAT AFTERNOON WHEN JACKIE OPENED THE CARTON OF GRAPES, MOST OF THEM WERE SOFT AND ROTTEN. THE APPLES WEREN'T MUCH BETTER. THE ONES ON TOP OF THE BUSHEL WERE SHINY AND SOLID, BUT THE ONES UNDERNEATH WERE BRUISED AND SOFT. JACKIE'S PLANS WERE RUINED. SHE WAS DETERMINED TO GET HER MONEY BACK.

1. WHEN A SELLER PRICES HIS GOODS TO MAKE A SALE, MUST HE ALWAYS PRODUCE MERCHANDISE THAT COMPLETELY FITS THE DESCRIPTION? DISCUSS.

2. IN THE ABOVE, DO YOU THINK THE MERCHANT HAS KEPT HIS AGREEMENT? WHY?

3. DO YOU THINK SUCH SALES SHOULD BE RECORDED IN WRITING?

4. WHAT SHOULD JACKIE DO?

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EXAMPLE

BILLY HERRYFIELD WAS HAVING A GOOD DEAL OF TROUBLE WITH HIS THREE-YEAR-OLD CHEVY. THE ENGINE STALLED EVERY TIME HE PULLED UP TO A STOP SIGN. IT GOT TO BE QUITE ANNOYING AND EMBARRASSING AS IMPATIENT DRIVERS BEHIND BLASTED AWAY ON THEIR HORNS.

ON ONE PARTICULAR DAY BILLY'S CAR STALLED AND HE COULDN'T GET IT GOING AGAIN. HE CALLED THE MAIN AUTO SERVICE TO THE RESCUE. THE REPAIRMAN LOOKED UNDER THE HOOD AND SHOOK HIS HEAD, "I THINK IT IS THE ELECTRICAL SYSTEM," SAID BILLY. "I'M SURE SOMETHING IS WRONG WITH THE IGNITION SWITCH."

"WE'LL HAVE TO TOW IT IN," REPLIED THE REPAIRMAN. "DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT, THOUGH, WE'LL GET IT FIXED."

"I CAN'T PICK IT UP TOMORROW," SAID BILLY, "BECAUSE I'M GOING TO BE OUT OF TOWN. IF THERE ARE ANY MAJOR COMPLICATIONS, OUTSIDE OF THE IGNITION SWITCH, DON'T DO ANYTHING UNTIL I GET BACK."

TWO DAYS LATER, WHEN BILLY RETURNED, HE WAS PRESENTED WITH A BILL FOR \$195. "WHAT IS THIS?" HE EXCLAIMED. "I DIDN'T AUTHORIZE ANY REPAIRS EXCEPT THOSE RELATED TO THE SWITCH." THE REPAIRMAN EXPLAINED THAT THE CAR EVENTUALLY NEEDED A NEW STARTER AND FUEL PUMP. "WE ALSO THOUGHT SOMETHING WAS WRONG WITH THE TRANSMISSION AND WE HAD TO TEAR IT DOWN," HE SAID. "IF YOU CAN'T PAY YOUR BILL WE WILL HAVE TO HOLD YOUR CAR." BILLY SAID THEY COULDN'T DO THAT, AND DROVE OFF.

SEVERAL DAYS LATER HE RECEIVED A LETTER SAYING THAT HIS WAGES WERE BEING GARNISHED UNTIL THE REPAIR BILL WAS PAID. HE DECIDED TO SEEK HELP FROM THE STATE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE.

1. WHAT IS MEANT BY A "GARNISHMENT OF WAGES"?

2. WHAT ASSISTANCE CAN THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE PROVIDE?

3. WHAT MISTAKES DID BILLY MAKE?

4. IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE IS THE FAIREST
WAY FOR THIS CASE TO BE DECIDED?

5. IF YOU WERE OVERCHARGED FOR A REPAIR BILL, WHAT WOULD
YOU DO ABOUT IT?

DO NOT FILM THIS PAGE

EXAMPLE

"THE PROBLEM OF CONSUMER PROTECTION IS VERY MUCH THE PROBLEM OF AMERICAN BUSINESS IN GENERAL, VERY MUCH THE PROBLEM OF THE LARGEST INDUSTRY AND THE LARGEST COMPANY, VERY MUCH THE PROBLEM OF THOSE WHO SHOULD BE ABLE TO PERFORM FAR BETTER AND FAR MORE RESPONSIBLY THAN THOSE FRINGE BUSINESSES WHO MIGHT BE UP AGAINST THE WALL ...

CONSUMER PROTECTION IS SIMPLY TO HOLD INDUSTRY TO HIGHER STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE, AND I CAN'T SEE WHY THEY SHOULD OBJECT TO THAT KIND OF INCENTIVE."

IT IS A DISSERVICE TO VIEW THIS AS A THREAT TO THE PRIVATE-ENTERPRISE ECONOMY OR TO BIG BUSINESS, IT'S JUST THE OPPOSITE. IT IS AN ATTEMPT TO PRESERVE THE FREE-ENTERPRISE ECONOMY BY MAKING THE MARKET WORK BETTER; AN ATTEMPT TO PRESERVE THE DEMOCRATIC CONTROL OF TECHNOLOGY BY GIVING GOVERNMENT A ROLE IN THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS AS TO HOW MUCH OR HOW LITTLE "SAFETY" PRODUCTS MUST CONTAIN.

RALPH NADER

PART I: READING INTERPRETATION: TRUE-FALSE. FROM YOUR READING OF THE ABOVE PASSAGE, ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS AS TO THE MEANING AND INTENT OF THE SPEAKER.

- _____ 1. THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR CONSUMER PROTECTION MUST BE PLACED ON THE GOVERNMENT.
- _____ 2. THE BIGGER THE BUSINESS, THE MORE IT SHOULD BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE.
- _____ 3. CONSUMER PROTECTION SHOULD BE A GOAL FOR INDUSTRY.
- _____ 4. "DECISION-MAKING AS USED HERE, MEANS GOVERNMENT CONTROL.
- _____ 5. THE PHRASE "FREE-ENTERPRISE ECONOMY" MEANS COMPETITION BETWEEN PRODUCERS.

PART II: MULTIPLE CHOICE:

- _____ 1. A MAJOR GOAL OF MANY CONSUMER PROTECTION GROUPS HAS BEEN TO (A) LOWER TAXES (B) OBTAIN EFFICIENCY IN GOVERNMENT (C) STIMULATE COMPETITION AMONG RETAILERS (D) EXPOSE UNETHICAL BUSINESS PRACTICES.
- _____ 2. THE SEAL OF THE "UNDERWRITERS LABORATORIES" WOULD LIKELY BE FOUND ON (A) BOOKS AND MAGAZINES (B) ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES (C) DRUGS AND COSMETICS (D) INSURANCE POLICIES
- _____ 3. WHAT IS THE CHIEF OBJECTIVE OF THE BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU? (A) BRING OUTSIDE INDUSTRIES TO THE CITY (B) ARRANGE COMMUNITY-SALES WEEKS (C) POLICE LOCAL BUSINESS PROCEDURES (D) PROTECT MERCHANTS FROM VANDALISM

- ___ 4. A PERSON WHO HAS BEEN DENIED A LOAN BECAUSE OF A "BAD" CREDIT RATING, CAN (A) FILE A DENIAL WITH THE STATE BANKING BOARD (B) REQUEST THE NAME OF THE COMPANY THAT PREPARED THE REPORT (C) TAKE COURT ACTION UNDER THE TRUTH-IN-LENDING LAW (D) DEMAND A SECOND HEARING ON HIS LOAN APPLICATION
- ___ 5. THE CONSUMER UNION'S MAJOR FUNCTION IS TO (A) TEST AND COMPARE THE PRODUCTS OF MANUFACTURERS (B) ORGANIZE COMMUNITY CONSUMER GROUPS (C) REPRESENT CONSUMERS IN CONGRESS (D) LOBBY FOR LOWER PRICES

PART III: MATCHING TEST: MATCH THE FEDERAL AGENCY FOR LAW LISTED AT LEFT THAT REGULATES OR SUPERVISES THE ACTIONS LISTED AT THE RIGHT.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| ___ 1. FEDERAL DRUG ADMINISTRATION | (A) BANS THE USE OF FRAUDULENT OR MISLEADING ADVERTISING |
| ___ 2. FAIR PACKAGING & LABELING ACT | (B) REQUIRES NOTIFICATION OF TRUE INTEREST CHARGES |
| ___ 3. TRUTH IN LENDING LAW | (C) ESTABLISHES GRADES AND STANDARDS FOR FOODS |
| ___ 4. FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION | (D) BANNED THE USE OF CYCLAMATES IN FOODS AS DANGEROUS |
| ___ 5. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE | (E) FOOD PROCESSORS REQUIRED TO LIST INGREDIENTS AND WEIGHT OF PACKAGED FOODS |

- preticketed goods—high fictitious prices on goods in advertising and on packaging by manufacturer
- discount house and wholesale catalog buying
- goods marked down more than 10%
- coupon books
- premiums offered
- deal which involves bait advertising. Example: sewing machine advertised at low price. When salesman comes he tries to sell higher priced one or says he is out of advertised one.
- get rich quick plans
- something for nothing schemes
- buying at a place just because they give trading stamps.

Suggestions for ways to be a wise consumer

- A. Before buying from any door to door salesman know he is authentic. If a stranger when you question credentials,
 - make a check of his local address
 - check with chamber of commerce, sheriff, or city hall.
- B. Before signing a contract compare goods being sold by door to door salesman with that in stores.
- C. Make certain you can be assured service and parts on equipment.
- D. Get information before making buys—particularly those involving large quantity of money or where repetitive buys will total large sums.
- E. Be inquisitive.
- F. Check exactly what guarantees and warranties are. Remember a guarantee is no better than the reputation of the firm.
- G. If you get "seals" or requests for donations, check with Chamber of Commerce or Better Business Bureau in the city where organization headquarters are located re-

garding authenticity or reputation of organization.

- H. Read a contract before signing.
- I. You are not required to pay for goods you receive through mail which you have not requested, provided you don't use goods.
- J. Deal with a reputable dealer or serviceman and a reliable manufacturer.
- K. Don't be afraid to say no. Build up your sales resistance.
- L. Analyze and evaluate the sales talk.
- M. If you are "taken in," report it to local authorities. This may prevent others from experiencing the same situation.
- N. Report a fraudulent or misrepresented deal to the Better Business Bureau.
- O. If you receive a weight reducing, phony medical cure or other such scheme through the mail that appears fraudulent, send this material to the Fraud Order Division, U. S. Post Office, Washington, D. C.

THIS PAMPHLET is one of a series on various consumer topics distributed by the credit union for your benefit. Your credit union is the best place to save and borrow money, and the best place to get impartial advice. Please let us know how we can serve you best.

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EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT



CUNA INTERNATIONAL, INC.

Box 431, Madison, Wisconsin 53701



FORM CCI-6



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PROBLEMS FACING THE CONSUMER



Consumers can help overcome some of the problems facing them by improving their choice-making and buying habits. However, there are other problems which require attention from business and government. And still others where organized consumers could accomplish much.

Both business and government have been doing things to improve the position of the consumer. However, there is still much to be desired in both areas. Business is first concerned with profit and then with producing desirable goods and services which the consumers want. Government is chiefly an umpire, but is also working with producer groups such as industry, labor and agriculture. A limited budget and shortage of personnel handicaps governmental aid.

The interests of the consumer have generally not been represented very well in government. With the establishment of the position of Special Assistant for Consumer Affairs to the President, however, the consumer has a representative on the staff of the Chief Executive. Consumer information now is given widest dissemination. Regional Consumer Conferences encourage discussion of consumer information among public, consumer groups, retailers, advertisers and manufacturers.

By Louise A. Young
School of Home Economics, University of Wisconsin

Organizations Which Help Protect the Consumer

A. Non-government

1. **Better Business Bureaus**—Started with a group of businessmen who organized National Vigilance Committee in 1911. Changed name to National Better Business Bureau in 1916. Now has more than 100 local but independent bureaus. Following are some of the purposes of the Better Business Bureau:

- 1) promoting and maintaining advertising and selling practices that are fair to business and consumers.
- 2) protecting business and the consumer from frauds, misrepresentation and trickery in business transactions.
- 3) providing certain aids for consumers such as the "Fact" booklets.

2. **Chamber of Commerce**—organized in many communities for the purpose of promoting and protecting business and indirectly, consumers.

B. Government — National

1. **Federal Trade Commission**—Although this organization has varying functions and many laws to enforce, from the consumer's point of view two of the important functions are: 1) administration of the false advertising law; and 2) jurisdiction over fraudulent sales promotion. Unfortunately neither the Federal Trade Commission or the Federal Communications Commission are maintaining adequate supervision over radio and television.

2. **Food and Drug Administration**—The law charges this organization with 1) protecting the consumer against economic fraud and health hazards and 2) basic research into aspects of new products. With more than 96,000 manufacturing, processing and warehouse establishments to inspect with only a limited staff of field inspectors, this job of protecting the consumer is not as complete as desired, and neither time nor

funds are left for research. Despite the shortage this organization does a pretty good job in seeing that food distributed interstate is pure and wholesome.

3. **Other**—There are several other government organizations which help protect the consumer. These include the:

a) **Antitrust Division of the Department of Justice** one of whose important duties is to preserve a competitive market. This includes checking on mergers, monopolistic developments and the price controls in items such as drugs, jewelry and funerals.

b) **The Post Office Department** supervises and protects the consumer against individuals and organizations who might use the mails to defraud.

c) **United States Department of Agriculture**. The many branches of this organization do things which protect the consumer, many indirectly. One function is acting as a regulatory agency for food products which go interstate. Grades are established for many products and a continuous inspection service is available for foods such as meat and canned foods.

The Institute of Home Economics, a branch of the USDA does research in foods, textiles and family economics which gives the consumer valuable information.

C. Government — State

Most states have government agencies charged with certain responsibilities for food, health and sanitation. A State Department of Agriculture normally would be concerned with fixing 1) definitions of products, 2) reasonable standards of quality, and 3) standards of measure or fill of containers. It probably also licenses food processors and dealers under prescribed regulations. It may be charged with maintaining sound sanitation conditions in food handling establishments, such as canneries, cold storage warehouses, wholesale groceries, grocery stores, meat markets and bakeries. State inspectors may check standards

of weights and measures, and proper operation of scales.

Some of the above functions may, of course, be handled by other agencies of state government, or by county or city government.

Departments of Health usually exist in state government, and in many county and large city governments. They often concern themselves with setting standards of health and safety for restaurants, hotels and other public places.

State agencies may also work to protect the public by setting standards, licensing and inspecting barber shops, beauty parlors, etc., and schools teaching operators such businesses.

Some Bewares for Consumers

Following are a few suggestions which, if considered, may prevent unhappy and/or expensive buying experience.

A. Door to door salesmen using one of the following leads:

- playing on your sympathy
- making a gift
- strings attached to sale — such as money off your sale price for each sale made to a person whose name you gave
- stating they are underselling
- cutting out middleman
- can't buy goods in the store

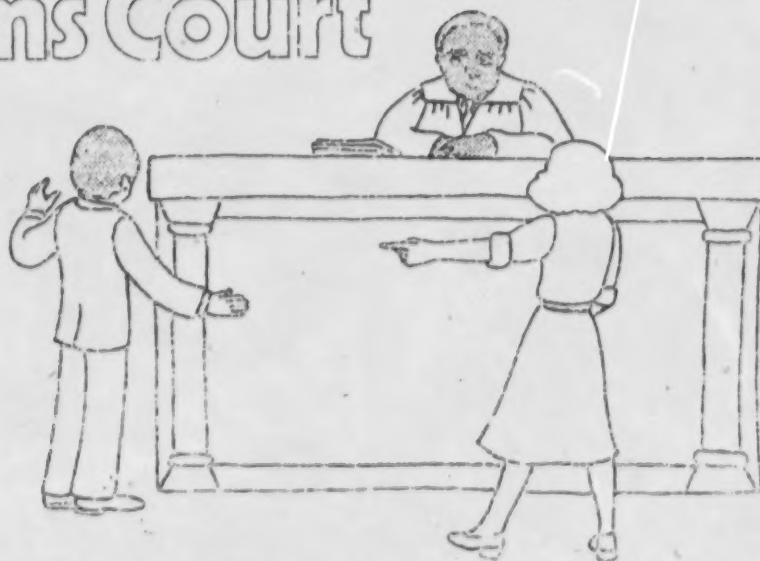
B. Or similar contract statements

- "just sign here. This statement just gives us right to use your name." (You may find you've signed a binding contract to buy something.)
- lifetime guarantee (what does lifetime mean?)

C. Consider carefully (investigate and compare) before buying or contracting for items such as following:

- correspondence courses
- door to door photographers
- work at home schemes

Small Claims Court



The small claims court provides an avenue of redress by making it easy and inexpensive for you to sue anyone who owes you money, without the use of a lawyer. However, if you lose the case, you cannot appeal the decision in a higher court.

Steps to follow:

- ① Contact the small claims court in your area for information. You will find the address and telephone number in your telephone directory.
- ② Get the full, legal name and address of the person(s) you are suing.
- ③ Go to the clerk of the small claims court located in the district where the person you are suing lives or works. The clerk will ask you to complete a form giving necessary information about your case. A small fee (\$2-\$10) is required. You will also be given a court order.
- ④ Make sure the court order is taken to the person you are suing, either by sending it in a certified letter or by asking someone **not involved** in your case to deliver it in person.

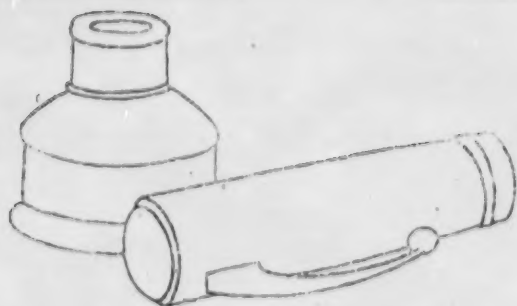
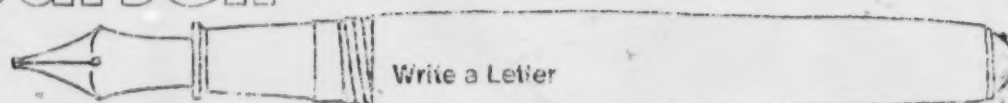
- ⑤ Before the date of the court hearing, gather important documents which support your claim, such as sales receipts, contracts or agreements, or copies of complaint letters. Ask any witnesses you may have to go to court with you.
- ⑥ If you do not speak English, ask if an interpreter is available at the court. If not, bring someone who can translate for you.
- ⑦ On the day of your hearing, tell the judge the facts of your case and hand in all papers and documents you feel may be helpful. The judge will hear both sides of the case and decide who is right.
- ⑧ If the case is decided in your favor, ask the clerk to assist you in collecting your money.

Express Yourself

Writing a Redress Letter

Follow this Format

1. Explain the problem carefully and briefly.
2. State when and where you bought the item or arranged for the service.
3. Explain how the purchase is defective.
4. List the steps you have already taken to solve the problem.
5. Give as much specific information as possible, including style numbers, catalog numbers, order numbers, etc.
6. State what you believe should be done about your claim.
7. Keep a copy of your letter of complaint.
8. If you write a second letter, include a copy of the first.



CONSUMER PROTECTION

Post Test

1. HOW LONG DID IT TAKE TO GO THROUGH THIS UNIT?
2. WHAT ARE THREE POINTS WHICH YOU LEARNED FROM THIS UNIT?
3. ARE THERE ANY QUESTIONS WHICH YOU HAVE CONCERNING CONSUMER PROTECTION?
4. IS THIS UNIT TOO ELEMENTARY OR TOO ADVANCED?
5. WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN STUDYING MORE UNITS ON CONSUMER EDUCATION?

APPENDIX 3

A REPORT ON:

INCORPORATION OF CONSUMER EDUCATION
IN THE BISMARCK ADULT BASIC AND SECONDARY
EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Submitted by:

WANDA HEINTZMAN
INSTRUCTOR, BISMARCK PROJECT

The Adult Performance Level Study has shown a great need for the education of adults in every day coping skills. This consumer economics curriculum uses the APL objectives to focus on basic consumer skills. A variety of possible learning activities were included since student needs vary dramatically.

This curriculum was used in a group situation concurrent with the Bismarck GED classes. The students were GED students and graduates who were recruited by the director of GED. The class met weekly for two hours alternating the time (from 7-9 p.m. one week, then 8-10 p.m. the next) so that those students studying for the GED would miss other classes only every other week.

The most positive outcome of the class was the students' enthusiasm. They were very verbal about the ways they were able to use the consumer skills daily, and consistently shared information and experiences with the group. These adults particularly enjoyed guest speakers and were always ready with questions and discussion.

These students did not fit the curriculum assumption of needing basic skills. They were highly motivated individuals with considerably advanced skills, so many adaptations were made to meet their needs. (This type of student would benefit from and enjoy a general life skills approach with a section on consumer economics.) It would have been ideal to have reached individuals who needed more basic help. Channeling into this program those students who have lesser potential for completing the GED may be one way. Perhaps more active advertising and recruiting is needed. An afternoon session might reach more people.

Changing hours weekly had its disadvantages in that once a session was missed, one lost track of the time schedule. A set time would make it

easier for students to plan their schedules and to return to class even if several sessions were missed.

Audio-visual materials needed to be screened carefully as many have high school students as the obvious target audience.

Valuing was used at the first class session to set goals and priorities. I would not do this again. A more "sensationalized" approach of hard core money saving tips may have interested and tempted more of the students to return. Many were lost, probably those we needed most to reach. Sharing one's values seemed to be too personal or too threatening with a group of strangers. The valuing technique was highly effective with the students as the class evolved.

A certificate of accomplishment was given to those students who had regularly attended class (all were accomplished at most basic skills from each general objective). The decision as to who receives a certificate could be based on specific individually set goals. This certificate is a way of reinforcing, encouraging, and promoting participation in the class.

It was a wonderful class to teach. We all have improved our abilities as consumers.

Wanda Heintzman

APPENDIX 4

SAMPLE LESSON PLAN

DEVELOPED BY WANDA HEINTZMAN

FOR USE IN

INCORPORATION OF CONSUMER EDUCATION

IN THE

BISMARCK ADULT BASIC

AND SECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAM

GENERAL
1 OBJECTIVE: The individual will plan family or individual budgets.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	LEARNING ACTIVITIES THE STUDENT WILL :	MATERIALS	EVALUATION
1A To know what a budget is and how it should be used.	Define and discuss budget related vocabulary. List advantages and disadvantages of budgeting. Cite examples of fixed and flexible expenses and place in appropriate budget categories. Use a budget to set realistic limits on spending for one month Play the "Budgeting Game"	Vocabulary list (Appendix 1A) ---- Sample expenses and budget form. Budget form. "The Budgeting Game"	Orally define five of the budget terms. Describe possible results of not budgeting. Categorize accurately. Re-evaluate at end of month and make adjustments. Completion of game.

GENERAL
1 OBJECTIVE:

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	TEACHING STRATEGY	MATERIALS	EVALUATION
1B To determine individual needs and resources	Discuss potential sources of income (salary, interest)	-----	List at least two sources of income.
	Identify standard items on an earnings statement (gross pay, net pay, federal income tax, F.I.C.A., allotments)	Sample earnings statement.	Locate and define "F.I.C.A."
	Determine budget requirements set by payment period (weekly, monthly, seasonal)	-----	Given a seasonal salary figure determine the amount to be spent and saved monthly and weekly.
	Compare factors that determine needs (occupation, family size, stage in life cycle)	Paper, old magazines, glue.	Make a collage showing your families needs
	Discuss "need" vs "want"	-----	List individual or family "needs" and "wants" then prioritize.
	Given an unexpected money problem, outline alternatives and adjust budget.	Grab bag of money problems or wheel of misfortune (car repair, traffic fine, medical expenses)	Workable budget adjustment.

GENERAL
1 OBJECTIVE:

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	TEACHING STRATEGY	MATERIALS	EVALUATION
1C Recognize how economic factors affect budgeting.	Define inflation.	-----	Illustrate how inflation has affected the costs of goods and services.
	Prepare a shopping list. After shopping add impulse buys. Examine why impulse purchases were made and how they can be minimized.	-----	Repeat the learning activity one week later to determine a change in impulse purchase.
	Interpret the effects of international trade situations on budgets (sugar imports, Common Market collapse, poor coffee bean crop)	-----	Compare costs of domestic and foreign made cars, report on causes of differences.

GENERAL

2 OBJECTIVE: The individual will be able to effectively use money, money substitutes, and financial services.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	TEACHING STRATEGY	MATERIALS	EVALUATION
2A To know how and why income and sales taxes are collected.	Define and discuss tax related vocabulary.	Vocabulary list (excise, luxury, customs duty, property taxes, regressive, deduction, dependent . . .)	Complete the vocabulary list.
	Discuss uses of tax money.	Pie charts of graphs of federal, state and local tax expenditures.	List four local expenditures of tax money.
	Use the telephone directory to locate sources of help and answers for tax questions (federal, state, local, private preparers . . .)	Telephone directory.	List at least three sources of help on taxes.
	Prepares questions for guest speaker from I.R.S. or State Tax Department.	Guest speaker.	Ask the questions.
	Discuss what records need to be kept for tax purposes.	List of important records (donations, income, medical expenses, prescription drugs . . .)	Prepare a system for keeping records needed to compute tax forms.
	Use W-2 wage statement, 1040 form and state tax forms to compute their taxes or a hypothetical case.	Sample forms of W-2, 1040 and state taxes.	Accurate computation of forms.

GENERAL
OBJECTIVE:

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	TEACHING STRATEGY	MATERIALS	EVALUATION
2A	Solve problems computing tax on common purchases.	Problems on computation of taxes on cigarettes, alcohol, clothing, restaurant check, gas	Accurately compute the tax problems.

GENERAL
2 OBJECTIVE:

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	TEACHING STRATEGY	MATERIALS	EVALUATION
2B To understand the relationship among various denominations of money and among various weights and measures.	Practice converting paper money to coins and vice-versa.	Coins and currency, conversion problems.	Accurately complete conversion problems on paper and with actual currency.
	Have a mini-bake sale and practice the money transaction.	Change and money box.	Accurately give change for purchases.
	Play "Monopoly" transferring banks responsibilities after a set number of transactions.	"Monopoly" game.	Completion of banking transactions.
	Solve common conversion problems.	Sample problems (correct change for a vending machine, telephone booth, bus, sq. ft. to sq. yds. . . .)	Accurately complete sample problems.
	Practice converting square feet to square yards.	Tape measure and carpet advertisements.	Figure the square yardage needed to carpet the classroom, then compute the cost.

GENERAL
OBJECTIVE:

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	TEACHING STRATEGY	MATERIALS	EVALUATION
2C To know how to use various media of exchange.	Complete (with teacher help) overhead transparency on the source, costs, uses and disadvantages of various media of exchange.	Overhead transparency and opaque projector, (Appendix 2C-1)	Identify which media he would use on an extended vacation, (for debt payment, for concert tickets . . .)
	Fill in sample forms of the various media,	Samples of a personal check, money order, traveler's check, bank check, credit slip,	Complete the forms,
	Listen to teacher lecture on credit (uses, types, vocabulary.)	Lecture (see outline Appendix 2C-2) and vocabulary sheet.	Complete vocabulary sheet.
	Discuss common credit problems (theft or loss of cards, denial of credit, inability to pay, incorrect billing.)	Open-ended case studies,	Role play handling common credit problems.
	Complete a sample credit application after reading the card holders agreement,	Credit application and card holders agreement,	Explain what you've agreed to if you sign the application.

GENERAL
OBJECTIVE:

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

TEACHING STRATEGY

MATERIALS

EVALUATION

2C

Compare the annual percentage
rates from samples of
several installment contracts.

Examine an interest statement.

Sample installment
contracts.

Interest statement.

Choose the contract with
the lowest interest rate.

Identify the amount that
can be deducted on an income
tax return.

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GENERAL
2 OBJECTIVE:

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	TEACHING STRATEGY	MATERIALS	EVALUATION
2D To know the various types of banking services.	Prepare questions for a guest speaker from a bank, savings and loan or credit union.	Guest speaker.	Ask the questions.
	Use of a phone directory to locate sources of loans (bank, credit union, finance company, pawnshop)	Phone book.	Call the sources and ask the interest due on a set sum of money.
	Read about different kinds of loans (personal, mortgage, auto) and calculate the interest for given hypothetical cases.	-----	Compare the costs of an auto loan at a car dealership and at a savings and loan.
	Study a vocabulary list of banking related terms (collateral, coapplicant, credit references, "commercial", "savings" or "trust" banks.)	-----	Define four banking terms.

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GENERAL
OBJECTIVE:

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	TEACHING STRATEGY	MATERIALS	EVALUATION
2D	Gather pamphlets on checking services from banks and credit unions to compare cost, interest, withdrawal and service charges. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of a checking account. Practice completing sample banking forms. Discuss special services ("Bank Card", direct deposit of Social Security, phone in bill payment, safety deposit boxes)	Pamphlets on checking services. ----- Sample banking forms (opening savings account, loans, deposit and withdrawal slips, check register) Pamphlets or guest speaker.	Decide which bank you would go to. Determine whether or not to have a checking account. Balance a check book from given information. List items that are best stored in a safety deposit box.

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